



OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

Navigating the Future

Management Plan Review



Coast Quest

Nothing promotes engagement in learning better than activities that immerse the student in the outdoors and lets them get their hands on their subject matter and the tools of science.

For five years, Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary operated a unique program called "Coast Quest." Coast Quest came into being as a result of conversations with teachers, administrators, concerned parents and partner organizations. It grew from the question "How can we focus on science, when kids are facing problems like drugs, family crisis, and finding their social identity?"

Our answer was a program designed to work with the whole student, placing a group together in a wild setting, exploring marine biology together, developing teamwork skills and reflecting on each one's place in their family, community and Nature.



Wilderness challenge. Middle schoolers learn that to study the wild coast, you have to get there first.

Middle School

In 2000, 2001 and 2002, Coast Quest focused on middle-schoolers. The program, led by experienced outdoor educators from the sanctuary and Olympic Park Institute, was based out of Mora Campground, near La Push. Students investigated tidepools on

dayhikes and learned how to camp, cook and build a team. The program culminated with a three-day backpacking trip to a remote beach where they tested their skills and studied rocks, tidepools, wildlife and forests.



Science on a tall ship, at sea. Students record data taken while aboard the historic Lady Washington.

High School

In 2003 and 2004, Coast Quest created once-in-a-lifetime experiences for high schoolers, aboard the tall ship Lady Washington, sailing from Grays Harbor to Port Angeles. For the high-school version of Coast Quest, students learned sailing skills, performed hands-on science at sea, developed teamwork and communication skills and reflected on their own individual experience and learning.

Regrettably, funding ran out for Coast Quest and the program was discontinued. However, the problems that plague young people have not gone away. Nor has the opportunity to mix solid science teaching with experiences that nourish the whole student and engage them in learning in a constructive and adventurous social setting.



Summer sunset. The learning never stops.

Education Program Contacts:

Robert Steelquist
Education and Outreach Coordinator
(360) 457-6622 x19
Robert.Steelquist@noaa.gov

Jacqueline Laverdure
Education Specialist
(360) 457-6622 x21
Jacqueline.Laverdure@noaa.gov